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Media in Pink and Blue: Gender Identity Performance in Twitch Gaming Communities

Abstract

The female and male "gamer" identity heavily influence the language actions of Multilinguals within the gaming community. Multilingual performance of the gamer identity can maintain gender stereotypes. These stereotypes are also reinforced by community members participating in streams of multilingual gamers. Community members, gamers, and streamers in EU-based gaming communities often reinforce the cultural gender norms and confine gender performance to males and females. Violation of this strict gender performance can correlate to bullying and sexual harassment by members of the gaming community. Through Computer-Mediated Dialogue Analysis of Twitch streams, we explore the language actions of multilinguals in these spaces. We examine the derogatory language practices found in multilingual gaming communities, as well as the language practices that challenge cultural gender norms through the examination of female-centered slurs and male-centered colloquiums. The argument is presented that gaming communities, and their members, have the capacity to both reinforce and diminish gender stereotypes.

Keywords

gender performance; multilingual; Computer-Mediated Dialogue Analysis; serious games

Introduction – Digital Gaming Spaces

Digital gaming spaces provide individuals with freedom of expression through established anonymity practices. Digital gaming spaces also present to individuals the possibility of membership and participation in a larger community of practice (CoP) known as the gaming community.[1] Anonymity provides players with infi-

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[1] J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York 1990.

nite possibilities in gender and identity performance within gaming spaces including CoPs. As participants and members interact in gaming spaces, ideologies of gender and sexual orientation intersect in player practices of gender performance.[2] Since participants and members of the gaming community are not isolated agents of a singular community but participate in other CoP in and outside of the gaming community, these ideologies are often echoes of larger cultural, national, or social values. Subsequently, gender ideologies found in smaller CoPs that revolve around specific games or gaming genres influence the larger gaming culture, as well as its portrayal in media. Likewise, the gaming culture becomes a cumulation of disseminated ideologies from CoPs and the gaming community, as well as learned practices, all of which are refined, reinforced, and reproduced by members and participants in these spaces.

These ideologies, in turn, circle back and influence the performance of gender within the gaming community. Even though anonymity gives players the freedom to express alternative sexual orientations and gender performance, an analysis of current practices in the gaming community and its CoPs revealed an exaggerated stereotypical binary model of male and female gender performance. Recent research also shows that gender performance can be connected with the identity performance of "gamer" in gaming spaces. Gamers are understood as core members of the gaming community and are ranked hierarchically as either serious or casual. Gamers, as active core members of their CoPs, evaluate and refine other members' expressions of this identity as well as larger ideologies and norms of gender performance.

Multilinguals who participate in the gaming community and its CoPs negotiate their gamer identity and gender performance through a variety of language practices. These language practices then serve as a medium for and reinforcement of ideologies related to gender and identity performance.[3] This paper demonstrates that through a micro-level analysis of language practices within a CoP, echoes of macro-level societal norms and ideologies about gender can be identified.

The following sections summarize previous research on gamer identity performance and ideologies of gender performance found in and outside of the gaming community. Through an investigation of collaborative gaming interactions, the argument is presented that the gamer identity and gender performance of female and male gamers are ranked within the gaming community by its members.

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[2] K. Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins, Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*, "Stanford Law Review" 1991, *43*(6), pp. 1241–1299.

[3] K.L. Gray, G. Voorhees, E. Vossen (eds.), *Feminism in Play* (Palgrave Games in Context), Cham 2018.

Gamer Identity Performance

From social constructivism, we understand that identities are performed and established through social interactions and networks.[4] Moreover, ideologies of identity performance are cross-construction between members of a CoP.[5] During cross-construction, ideologies of membership are the first to intersect and become interlocked. The performance of the identity of members or non-members can be rejected or accepted by other members and participants within a CoP. It is only through active negotiation and mutual engagement that membership can be established. Once a participant is distinguished as a member, the CoP distinguishes them as either a core or peripheral member. In the gaming community members perform the identity or are ascribed the status of gamer (core) or non-gamer (peripheral) by its members. A member's distinction as gamer is based on that individual's play experience, their time or monetary investment in the gaming industry, their engagement with other members, and expressions of expert knowledge.[6] If any of these stipulations are not met or are deemed insufficient, a member's gamer identity performance can be rejected, downgraded, or ascribed a lower status by other members.

Overall, identity performance in the gaming community is scaffolded hierarchically with gamers considered as core members and these members ranked as either serious or casual gamers. This ranking is less related to a player's ability and level within a game and more based on their cumulative experience, play practices, and CoP engagement. In the gaming community, the downgrading of member status can be from serious to casual gamer or gamer to non-gamer. The criteria for the separation of casual and serious gamers are gaming knowledge,[7] media and gaming experience and literacy,[8] and gaming language.[9]

The ranking of the gamer identity directly affects performance and engagement within a CoP. Serious gamers may, for example, disengage with casual gam-

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[4] S. Corder, M. Meyerhoff, *Communities of Practice in the Analysis of Intercultural Communication*, [in:] H. Kotthoff, H. Spencer-Oatey (eds.), *Handbook of Intercultural Communication*, 2007, pp. 441–461.

[5] M. Meyerhoff, *Biographies, Agency and Power*, "Journal of Sociolinguistics" 2005, *9*(4), pp. 595–601.

[6] A. Shaw, *On Not Becoming Gamers: Moving Beyond the Constructed Audience*, "Ada New Media" 2021, (2), pp. 1–22.

[7] M. Kivijärvi, S. Katila, *Becoming a Gamer: Performative Construction of Gendered Gamer Identities*, "Games and Culture" 2021, *17*(3), pp. 461–481.

[8] H. Lukosch, S. Kurapati, D. Groen, A. Verbraeck, *Gender and Cultural Differences in Game-Based Learning Experiences*, "The Electronic Journal of e-Learning" 2017, *15*(4), pp. 310–319.

[9] L. Scholes, K.A. Mills, E. Wallace, *Boys' Gaming Identities and Opportunities for Learning*, "Learning, Media and Technology" 2022, *47*(2), pp. 163–178.

ers to retain their status. In contrast gamers, despite their advanced level of play and extensive experience within a CoP, may reject their status as serious gamer and self-identify as casual gamers. This status rejection can be to avoid the imposing of identity and/or gender ideologies on their play styles.

Through an analysis of language practices, the hierarchical ranking of members of the gaming community can be seen. Previous research has shown that the prevalence of gaming lexemes, as part of a ludolect, can be an indicator of this distinction.[10] It is the belief of this author that, as demonstrated through this paper's findings, an examination of gaming lexemes in combination with gender pronouns and gender lexemes a distinction can be made between gamers and non-gamers as well as serious and casual gamers. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate a connection between a hierarchical ranking of gender performance with gamer identities.

Gender Performance

In the discussion of gender performance, there is a distinction between biological, sexual, and socio-cultural conditions of gender, but gender, in every case, is understood as a construct. Members of society and culture view these constructs through an "ideological filter"[11] and ascribe a social status to gender performances based on their ideologies. The social status of gender, shaped and constricted by culture and society, in turn, affects gender performance in CoPs.[12] Members of CoPs, as with identity, refine, reinforce, and reproduce gender ideologies and their status through negotiation of gender performance. Gender performance in CoPs is then understood as a cumulation of repetitive actions with ascribed meaning from its members.[13] Through this process, members of CoPs engage in ideological formation and reinforcement which again flow into, across, and outside their CoPs and the gaming community. This process of ideologies intersecting in, outside, and across CoPs, makes it difficult to separate the ideologies and status of gender performance in micro language processes. However, what is clear is the existence of ideologies of gender and the result of empowerment and disempowerment of certain gender performances by members of the gaming community.[14]

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[10] F. Heritage, *Language, Gender and Videogames: Using Corpora to Analyse the Representation of Gender in Fantasy Videogames*, Cham 2021.

[11] D. Cameron, *Language, Gender, and Sexuality: Current Issues and New Directions*, "Applied Linguistics" 2005, *26*(4), pp. 482–502.

[12] J. Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, Open University Press, Buckingham 2002.

[13] J. Butler, *Gender Trouble…*, *op. cit.*

[14] K. Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins, Intersectionality…*, *op. cit.*

Gender Performance and Ideologies in the Gaming Community

Traditionally, in digital gaming spaces, gender can be performed through the designing and customization of avatars or in-game characters. The expansion of character creation and the customization of avatars in games ideally blur the binary lines of gender performance.[15] However, the portrayal of gender in digital games continues to replicate and disseminate exaggerated stylized stereotypes of male and female gender performance and gender ideologies.[16] Female avatars are portrayed as overtly sexualized while male avatars are portrayed as overly muscular. Additionally, ideologies of hegemonic standards of masculinity and femininity are present in dialogue and characteristics of male and female characters in games. Male characters are portrayed as powerful, arrogant, aggressive, and violent caregivers, while female characters are portrayed as warm, weak, submissive, emotional, and in need of care.[17]

Due to the nature of intersectionality, these unrealistic representations of the male and female gender in games bleed into ideologies surrounding the gaming community and its members. One example is the perspective in media that extensive engagement in the gaming communities or games preserves and further disseminates sexism and stereotypes of gender performance.[18] These stereotypical unrealistic portrayals of gender in games and of the gaming community can then reintegrate into gender ideologies within CoPs and directly affect a player's status as gamer, non-gamer, as well as serious and casual gamer. One example of this is the portrayal of the "gamer girl" – an overly sexualized, submissive, feminine gamer. In some cases, female gender performance in the gaming community becomes synonymous with performing the gamer girl archetype.[19]

Gender and Identity Ideologies in the Gaming Community

In the gaming community, gamer identity performance has become tantamount to the male gender performance. This is partly due to the portrayal of gender

[15] L. Eklund, *Doing Gender in Cyberspace: The Performance of Gender by Female World of Warcraft Players. In Convergence*, "The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies" 2011, *17*(3), pp. 323–342.

[16] F. Heritage, *Language, Gender and Videogames…*, *op. cit.*

[17] K.E. Dill, K.P. Thill, *Video Game Characters and the Socialization of Gender Roles: Young People's Perceptions Mirror Sexist Media Depictions*, "Sex Roles: A Journal of Research" 2007, *57*, pp. 851–864.

[18] J. Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, *op. cit.*

[19] M.M. Kasumovic, J.H. Kuznekoff, *Insights into Sexism: Male Status and Performance Moderates Female-Directed Hostile and Amicable Behaviour*, "Plos One" 2015, *10*(7), pp. 1–14.

ideologies from the gaming community in popular culture and media. Even in their efforts to reject displayed ideologies, members of the gaming community have further empowered the male gamer archetype.[20] This has led to members hierarchically positioning male gamer identity and gender performance above all female gamer, which in turn ranks casual and serious male gamer above serious and casual female gamers. On a fundamental level, what separates male and female gamers is superficial in nature. Previous research found that differences in media competence and digital literacy were cited as distinguishing factors by members of CoPs within the gaming community.[21]
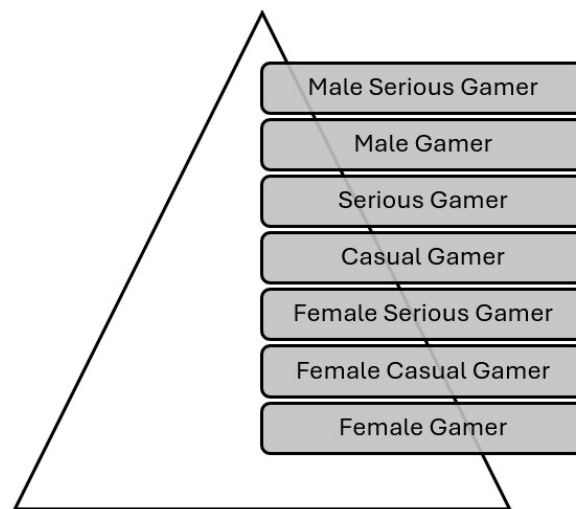

Figure 1. A realization of ideologies of gender and identity performance in the gaming community

This hieratical positioning of gender along with identity performance in the gaming community has a direct effect on its members. At the outset, the empowerment of the male gamer perpetuates sexist attitudes in gender and identity ideologies in CoPs.[22, 23] The dissemination of these attitudes and ideologies then breeds animosity towards female gamers or any member performing a gender outside the binary structure. In many instances, any form of female gender performance can be discounted or considered unreliable or untrustworthy by its members.[24] In some cases, female gender performance is positioned as a direct threat to male

[20] D. Cameron, *Language, Gender, and Sexuality…*, *op. cit.*

[21] L. Scholes, K.A. Mills, E. Wallace, *Boys' Gaming Identities…*, *op. cit.*

[22] K.L. Gray, G. Voorhees, E. Vossen (eds.), *Feminism in Play*, *op. cit.*

[23] J. Beynon, *Masculinities and Culture*, *op. cit.*

[24] S.C. Herring, A. Martinson, *Assessing Gender Authenticity in Computer-Mediated Language Use: Evidence From an Identity Game*, "Journal of Language and Social Psychology" 2004, *23*(4), pp. 424–446.

gamer status within the community.[25] This can lead to female members more often self-identifying as a casual gamer instead of a serious gamer in an effort to avoid imposed gender ideologies by other members.[26]

In order to resist ideologies of gender and identity performance, members of the gaming community emphasize competitive,[27] and professional mastery of gameplay.[28] Female gamers have also been seen to adopt aggressive play practices, often synonymous with the male gamer gender and identity performance, as a means of rejecting prejudices and curbing animosity practices in their CoPs. In some instances, members of the gaming community have even embraced the "gamer girl" archetype as a means of reclaiming and empowering female gender performance in the gaming community.[29]

Research Method

The investigation into the connection between gender performance and identity performance was part of an investigation of game-based interactions in Twitch Streams. The objective was to identify gender performance, gamer identity performance, hierarchies of those performances, any connection between gamer identity and gender performance, and any ideologies of gamer identity and gender performance.

In this analysis, gameplay of CoP members of varying gender performances was selected from three separate games and genres: Minecraft, Final Fantasy XIV, and PUBG Battlegrounds. All participants were multilinguals who played cooperatively during a minimum of three streamed sessions on Twitch. The analyzed gaming modes were player versus player (PvP) matches in Final Fantasy XIV, survival mode in Minecraft, and "Squads" or Team mode in PUBG Battlegrounds. All interactions by the players and chat members during streamed gameplay were transcribed and coded using MAXQDA. Due to data and privacy protection laws, the exact sexuality, name, age, nationality, and race of the individuals in this study have been excluded from this publication.

The analysis of streamed game interactions in this study replicated previous research in the investigation of gender and identity performance and ideologies in digital gaming interactions using Computer-Mediated Dialogue Analysis meth-

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[25] D. Cameron, *Language, Gender, and Sexuality…*, *op. cit.*

[26] M. Kivijärvi, S. Katila, *Becoming a Gamer…*, *op. cit.*

[27] M.M. Kasumovic, J.H. Kuznekoff, *Insights into Sexism…*, *op. cit.*

[28] T.L. Taylor, *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*, Cambridge 2006.

[29] P. Royse, J. Lee, B. Undrahbuyan, M. Hopson, M. Consalvo, *Women and Games: Technologies of the Gendered Self*, "New Media & Society" 2007, *9*(4), pp. 555–576.

ods. The linguistic practices coded in this study were, first, linguistic markers that distinguish male and female gender performance. Previous research characterizes female gender performance as containing apologies, compliments, expressions of emotion and a lack of profanity, while male gender performance is characterized by assertions, profanity, sarcasm, and explicit sexual references.[30] The second linguistic markers coded for this research were gaming lexemes. Previous research found gaming lexemes to be an indicator of and distinguishment between serious and casual gamer identity performance,[31] as well as female gamer and male gamer gender and identity performance.[32] The third linguistic markers coded in this investigation were female, male, and neutral gender pronouns and gendered lexemes. Previous research has connected gender ideologies and gender performance with these markers.[33]

In addition to an analysis of language practices, screen recordings were made of player in-game actions, and patterns of hyper-aggression, dominance, and violence in gameplay were coded. Previous research has found these patterns of gameplay to be connected with male gamer gender identity performance,[34] as well as female serious gamer identity performance.[35]

Findings: Gender Performance

From the analysis of gender pronouns and gender lexemes, three out of the twelve participants performed the female gender, one performed the female gender while self-identifying as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, one performed the male gender while self-identifying as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and eight performed the male gender. These findings are consistent with the non-official demographics of the three selected games with 57.4% of PUBG players, 60% of Minecraft players, and roughly 70% of Final Fantasy players self-identifying as male.[36]

From an analysis of coded language practices in male and female gender performance, the prevalence of profanity, assertions, and sexual references was not an indicator of male gender performance,[37] due to their occurrence in all participants' speech. Additionally, emotional responses, apologies, compliments, and explana-

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[30] S.C. Herring, A. Martinson, *Assessing Gender Authenticity…*, *op. cit.*

[31] M. Kivijärvi, S. Katila, *Becoming a Gamer…*, *op. cit.*

[32] K.L. Gray, G. Voorhees, E. Vossen (eds.), *Feminism in Play*, *op. cit.*

[33] F. Heritage, *Language, Gender and Videogames…*, *op. cit.*

[34] H. Lukosch, S. Kurapati, D. Groen, A. Verbraeck, *Gender and Cultural Differences…*, *op. cit.*

[35] M.M. Kasumovic, J.H. Kuznekoff, *Insights into Sexism…*, *op. cit.*

[36] J. Clement, *Distribution of twitch.tv Users Worldwide by Gender*, Statista, 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/633937/twitch-user-gender-worldwide/ [accessed: 31.08.2024].

[37] S.C. Herring, A. Martinson, *Assessing Gender Authenticity…*, *op. cit.*

tions, traditionally an indicator of female gender performance,[38] were found in both female and male player interactions.

From the analysis of gendered lexemes and gender pronouns, the investigation found that the frequency of neutral gender lexemes and gender pronouns surpassed the combined frequency of male and female gender pronouns and gender lexemes. This overwhelming prevalence of neutral gender lexemes and pronouns, including plural pronouns, specifically first and third-person singular and plural pronouns was due to the collaborative nature of the gameplay, game modes, and the cooperative interactions of the players in the game.

Table 1. Gender pronouns and gender lexemes in streamed game-centered interactions

	Chat Participants		**Players**		**Combined**	
Male	guy, boy, man, bro(ther), king, sir, dad, dude, ball, uncle	83	guy, bro(ther), dude, man, boy, sir	355	guy, bro(ther), dude, man, boy, sir, king, dad, uncle, ball	438
(Male) Pronouns	him, he, his	32	he, him, his, himself	399	he, him, his, himself	431
Neutral	Bestie, people, friend, baby, buddy, asexual, pro(fessional), baddie	90	One, people, person, player, enemy, team, baby, idiot, bestie, pro(fessional), other, buddy	209	people, bestie, one, baby, player, enemy, pro(fessional), buddy, team, idiot, friend, other, asexual, baddie	299
(Neutral) Pronouns	it, they, them, us, we, everyone, y'all, anyone, everybody, our, their	106	We, they, us, someone, them, our, somebody, everyone, everybody, it, their, nobody, anybody, anyone, y'all, ourselves	860	We, they, us, someone, them, it, our, everyone, somebody, everybody, their, nobody, y'all, anyone, anybody, ourselves	966
Female	girl, lesbian, bitch, queen, mom, miss, wife, woman, female, lady	45	girl, bitch, female, lady, hag, kitten	17	girl, lesbian, bitch, female, mom, queen, lady, wife, woman, miss, hag, kitten	62
(Female) Pronouns	she, her	40	she, her	46	she, her	86

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[38] R. Thomson, T. Murachver, *Predicting Gender…*, *op. cit.*

From a combined analysis of gaming lexemes, gender pronouns, gendered lex-
emes, and patterns of play several patterns were identified. Firstly, in the absence
of gender performance the personal pronouns "he," "him," and possessive pronoun
"his," followed by the third person pronouns "they" and "them," were most often
used to reference other players or in-game characters. Only in one stream of Mine-
craft and one stream of Final Fantasy XIV were the third-person pronouns "she"
and "her" are used in the absence of gender performance. The following excerpt
from a PvP match in Final Fantasy XIV demonstrates this:

> A: Oh. Kill the Scholar. Oh. is this…
> G: Woah, nice scholar.
> A: He's running it down…
> G: Nice, man.
> A: He's running down mid.
> G: Running down mid.
> Yes, bro, you have me one on one. Yes, bro. You didn't even stun me.
> B: Totally.
> S: I wish it's mech. Oh.
> G: Man, I'm fucking toxic asshole.
> G: I'm just killing mage.
> A: Where's the…
> G: She's running it down mid, dude.

This excerpt from Final Fantasy XIV gameplay also demonstrates the common
uses of the male-coded gender lexemes "man" and "bro" found across all data sets.
This study found that all players and chat participants, regardless of gender perfor-
mance, used "man" and "bro" lexemes as universal interjections and expletives in the
coordination of in-game actions, the expression of game events, and player actions.

Findings: Gender Ideologies

The analysis of gender pronouns and gendered lexemes enabled the identifica-
tion of cultural and societal gender ideologies within the gaming community.
Firstly, Male-coded lexemes were found to be used while addressing other players
in instances of successful gameplay or in-game player performance. In contrast,
female-coded lexemes were used while addressing in-game players in instances
of match loss, mistakes in play, or player death. Pattern of derogatory female-gen-
dered lexemes like "hag" and positive male-coded lexemes like "king" indicates
the prevalence and dissemination of sexist attitudes and hegemonic ideologies, as
well as the attribution of higher member status to male-gender performing play-
ers in the gaming community. Secondly, societal and cultural ideologies, as well

as the nature of intersectionality, were demonstrated through the use of gendered lexemes like "uncle" and "dad" while addressing male-gender performing players and "mom" and "wife" while addressing female-gender performing players. The following interaction between chat participants over a dragon character found in Minecraft is a demonstration of the prevalence of these ideologies:

> Althechickn: the dragon is obviously asexual
> juliaa_price: homophobic to kill lesbian dragon
> Frog_waffles: lesbian queen!!!!
> randomviolence1: Ender dragon ace queen
> 420weedtown: btw the dragon's pronouns are she/her [streamer d] still forget sometimes.
> TinyOrangeApes: they're homophobic
> Randomviolence:1 Ender dragon ace queen
> mika1t: [streamer k] misgendered the dragon
> X_ouvia_mushroom: the ender dragon is a girlboss
> if_alamrockfred: i want to pet the dragon on the head she's a good girl.
> TinyOrangeApes: they are such drama queens
> Nhite: doing great bestie aim for the head when she's down
> moraalite: shes actually a girlboss
> froggogogogo: Pop off, Ender Dragon girlboss
> mayonaiseboi731: Why is she spitting so many ballz

Within the framework of the larger gaming community, this interaction can be interpreted as a pattern of deviation from gender ideologies and norms. Moreover, these members have established and reinforced ideologies on gender performance within their own CoP through deviation [39] However, even though the motivation of these members may be to expand the binary female and male gender performance found in the gaming community, their language practices have the opposite effect. Their use of sexual innuendos and female-gendered lexemes "drama queens," and "girl boss" simultaneously serve as a reinforcement of exaggerated stylized gender performance found in the gaming community and culture.

The prevalence of gender ideologies, as well as sexist attitudes to non-male performing players were also found in instances of sexual harassment of female-gender performing players. The following excerpt is between chat participants and the players "I" and "M" in a round of Teams in PUBG Battlegrounds:

> I: (reads chat) What – wait, wait. "My dick is big. Ban in coming."
> M: (laughs) What?
> I: (reads chat) "Very very big dick. Lick dick."
> M: (laughs) Oh my god.
> I: I mean, what's… what's wrong with that? I mean did he – did he think it was an insult?

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[39] D. Cameron, *Language, Gender, and Sexuality…*, *op. cit.*

M: Wow that was a fucking pro player. I owned him. Get shit on kid.
Get back to the lobby.
I: Why would I be banned? I mean he is getting banned for typing his sexual stiff in my chat that I do in my private time.
M: "I"!?
I: I'm… "M" I knew you were gonna fucking react like that. What? What the f…
M: young… young lady, this is a boobs and va-jean conversation only. We don't ever speak about that.

The chat participant's speech can either be interpreted as a member viewing female-gender-performing players in PUBG as a threat to low-status male gamer identity performance, or the aggressive playing styles of the female gender-performing players being a violation of community standards.[40, 41] In both cases, player "I" and "M"'s responses can be interpreted as resistance to derogatory ideologies of female gamer gender identity performance. The sexually explicit response of both players, the action of banning, and in-game death threats are all actions of reinforcement of gender ideologies within their PUBG CoP and a resistance to sexist or discriminatory behaviour in the gaming community. This excerpt is part of a series of instances where "I" and "M" monitor, reject, and correct violations of community standards including gender ideologies. By continually monitoring adherence to community standards and ideologies, "I" and "M" also distinguish themselves not only as gamers (members) but as serious gamers (core members) in the gaming community and their CoP.[42]

The findings of this study are in agreement with previous research that female players are more active in their display of adherence to and reinforcement of gender ideologies of a community of practice, since they are often viewed as outsiders or "interlopers" by other members of the gaming community.[43]

Findings: Gamer Identity Performance and Ideologies

This study found player motivation and experience to be the greatest indicator of the distinction between gamer and non-gamer, as well as casual and serious gamer identity performance. The serious gamer identity was performed through expressions of gameplay experience, strategy, preferences, explanations of participation in competitive events or game-centred affinity spaces, expressions of player in-game statistics, and aggressive play patterns.

[40] M.M. Kasumovic, J.H. Kuznekoff, *Insights into Sexism…*, *op. cit.*
[41] M. Kivijärvi, S. Katila, *Becoming a Gamer…*, *op. cit.*
[42] M. Meyerhoff, *Biographies, Agency and Power*, *op. cit.*
[43] D. Cameron, *Language, Gender, and Sexuality…*, *op. cit.*

Table 2. Gamer identity and gender performance

Games	Minecraft	Final Fantasy XIV	PUBG Battlegrounds
Player Groups	"D" and "K"	"B" and "J" "B", "A", "F" and "G"	"I" and "M" "I" and "Z" "S" and "T"
Performed Gender Identity	Male	Male	Female, Female and Male
Performed Gamer and Gender Identity by Streamers	Non-gamer, gamer, casual gamer.	Gamer, serious gamer, casual gamer, male gamer, serious male gamer, casual male gamer	Gamer, casual gamer, serious female gamer, casual female gamer, male gamer serious male gamer, casual male gamer
Performed Multilin-gual Identity	English and French speaker	English, German, and Swedish speaker	English and Spanish speaker

The following excerpt from a stream of PUBG Battlegrounds is an example of expressions of player experience, strategy, preferences, in-game statistics and aggressive play patterns:

Z: Oh! What do you say about Rando (map)?

I: It's okay. I'm not convinced yet.

Z: It's okay.

I: I mean I have…, it's really good. I mean, it looks really good and the performance is really good.

Z: Okay.

I: But it's too open, it's too slow for me. There is not enough loot.

Z: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know – you know, when I played the first day?

I: Yeah?

Z: I was like, oh, this is not the map for "I". She likes to hunt for kills. There is no way to hunt for kills.

I: No, I know.

Z: There is no way. Bro, if you get that chicken dinner with six kills, you're like, damn, son, let's go.

I: Yep. I know.

In this interaction, "Z" (he/him) compliments "I"'s (she/her) aggressive and competitive play strategy. "I"'s response tokens indicate a correlation between aggressive patterns of play and the performance of the identity of serious gamer, while simultaneously positioning non-casual gamer identity performance as being of lower status in the gaming community.

This study also found gaming lexemes, gendered lexemes, and complexity in the speech act of complaints are indicators of serious and casual gamer identity

performance. The use of gaming lexemes like "chill", "fun" and "learn" was an indicator of the casual gamer identity performance, while the use of neutral gendered lexemes like "buddy," "idiot," "noob," and "baby" was an indicator of ascribing the identity of casual gamer to other players and simultaneously performing the identity of serious gamer. The use of these neutral gendered lexemes is also an indicator of the lower status of the casual gamer identity performance in the gaming community. During gameplay, the speech act of complaints was a distinguishing factor between serious and casual gamer identity performance. This study found that casual gamer identity performance contained primarily complaints over living or dying in the game, while serious gamer identity performance contained additional complains over in-game events, the accuracy of player actions, or player response time was an indicator of serious gamer identity performance.

The collection of ethnographic data from stream participants' Twitch profiles was instrumental in the distinguishment of gamer identity performance. This study found that member-ascribed gamer identity performance coincided with the use of the labels "Twitch partner," "member," or the name of a Twitch guild or gaming group on player streaming profiles. In contrast, the ascribed non-gamer identity performance coincided with player indication of "YouTuber" or "YouTube personality" on their Twitch profile. Finally, the casual gamer identity performance coincided with the use of the gaming lexemes "relax," "chill," "fun" and "explore" on their Twitch profiles.

Findings: Connecting Gamer Identity and Gender Performance

The connection of gamer identity performance with gender performance was primarily established through an analysis of gender pronouns and gendered lexemes combined with an analysis of response tokens. The findings of this study are in line with previous research that expressions of anti or pro-feminist beliefs and the acceptance or rejection of gender-neutral gaming language were indications of empowerment and disempowerment of gender performance as well as the dissemination of larger societal and cultural gender ideologies.[44] An example of the disempowerment of the female gamer gender identity performance is found in this interaction during a PVP match in Final Fantasy XIV:

B: Oh, enemy mercenary. I see what you mean.
A: Yeah. Enemy. Holy shit, he runs fast. He already got past here [player "G"].
G: Yeah, I know. That's why I called this target.

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[44] K.L. Gray, G. Voorhees, E. Vossen (eds.), *Feminism in Play*, *op. cit*.

A: Okay.
G: What the fuck are you doing, you stupid fuck? Bye.
A: [player "G"], he's destroying my –
G: Kill this silly little bitch now.
A: Took him.
G: Man, mech runs so fucking fast. It's annoying.
A: Yo! Got a gale I think, yeah.
G: Yeah, let's go to mech. Back to mech. Mercenary.
A: Yeah.
F: He's almost there.
B: Yeah, he's at 10 percent.
A: 'kay. Okay.
G: Mech is annoying.
F: Oh, I just killed mechs.

In this interaction, the use of the female-coded gender lexeme "bitch" attributes the identity performance of casual gamer to the other player. Additionally, player "G"'s self-reporting and reflection demonstrate a connection between gamer identity and gender performance. Moreover, it demonstrates the hierarchy of the gaming community where a lower status is ascribed to the female gamer, female casual gamer and female serious gamer gender and identity performance and a high status is ascribed to the casual, serious, male casual, and male serious identity performance.

The connection between gamer identity and gender performance can also be found in multilingual gaming lexeme choice in Spanish, Serbian, and Italian that occurred in the streamed interactions. The following excerpt is from a Teams match in PUBG in Serbian:

S: Yeah, now everyone wants to fight with us.
T: mmm. Classic. gde mali on dečak, xyx? (where is that little boy huh?)
S: I think he's under the hill. Defend the rock.
T: He was in this –
S: mea culpa (so bad)
T: mea culpa (so bad). ма та risa! (what a lynx!)

In this interaction "T"'s (she/her) use of the female-gendered lexeme "risa" (lynx) and "S" (he/him) use of the pronoun "he" is an indication of the higher status of the male gamer gender identity in the gaming community, while attributing the serious male gamer identity performance to the player that killed them.

In contrast, the reverse derogatory use of the male-coded gendered lexeme "dečak" (boy) in combination with the lexeme "mali" (little), can be seen as a resistance to derogatory ideologies of female gamer gender identity performance in

the gaming community, while also demonstrating the hierarchical positioning of the male casual and serious gamer gender identity performance above the female casual and serious gamer gender identity performance.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was an investigation of the representation and performance of gender in the gaming community The findings from this study indicate that the oversimplification and stylized representations of gender performance, found in gaming culture and the gaming communities, are reinforced by members and participants in CoPs in the gaming community.[45] Furthermore, binary gender performances found in CoPs in the gaming community are echoes of larger societal and cultural ideologies of gender. Moreover, The investigation of multilingual language practices in game-centred interactions, demonstrated a connection between gender performance and gamer identity performance in the gaming community. Additionally, the combined analysis of gender pronouns, gendered lexemes, gaming lexemes and in-game action can distinguish the ascribed status and hierarchical positioning of gender and identity performance in the gaming community. Finally, through the sociological concepts of intersectionality and CoP this study highlighted the dissemination of societal and cultural ideologies of gender and identity performance.

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[45] K.E. Dill, K.P. Thill, *Video Game Characters and the Socialization…*, *op. cit.*

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